

# THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIO-PERSONAL VARIABLES WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS

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## ABSTRACT

*Developmental readiness is globally recognised as a significant component of school readiness. It is a measure of a child's physical, cognitive and socio-emotional preparedness to succeed in formal schooling. Thus, teachers' knowledge allows them to expand various skills of developmental readiness among children. The purpose of this study was to analyse the knowledge of teachers regarding developmental readiness of children for formal schooling. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 teachers (i.e. 50 rural and 50 urban) teaching class-I. Self-structured teacher's knowledge questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge of teachers. Frequency, Z-test and correlation were used for analysis of results. The overall findings of the study indicated that urban teachers had better knowledge than rural teachers. Rural and urban teachers with regular degree had better knowledge than their counterparts with correspondence degree. The correlation analysis showed a positive and significant relationship of educational qualification as well as teaching experience with knowledge of the teachers which concluded that more the educational qualification and teaching experience of the teachers, better was the knowledge regarding developmental readiness in young children.*

**KEYWORD:** Teachers' Socio-Personal Variables, Teachers' Knowledge & Developmental Readiness

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood years are considered as the most critical period in the individual's life which involves rapid development of the brain that has high capacity for development in various domains that laid foundation for wellbeing throughout life. The transition from home to formal schooling is recognised as a developmental milestone at the end of the early childhood period. In educational terms, the word 'transition' refers to the period of time before and after a child moves from either home or an early childhood program into primary school (Arnold *et al* 2010). This change from one environment to another need to be considered as a 'process' which encompasses ready children, ready families as well as ready teachers rather considering it as an isolated 'event' for child only.

Readiness means a phase at which child is prepared to learn in a stimulating learning environment without

emotional disturbance. Thus school readiness comprises ready child for school to participate in and get benefitted from learning experiences that could promote the child's future success. The two characteristic feature of school readiness are 'transition' and 'gaining competencies' (UNICEF 2012). There is a shift in definition of school readiness in educational term that excludes placing a huge stress on academic skills but focus on various other approaches that are recommended for preparation of the child through pre-primary and primary school-based curriculum. Ready child for school requires developmental readiness of child along with his/her academic readiness.

Developmental readiness is refers to the multifaceted and holistic concept which encompass skills of various developmental domains among young children at the time of entrance in the formal school (Chandra 2017). It not only helps in smooth transition of children from pre-school to the primary school but also manage the academic pressure of formal learning environment. Regardless of age, assessment of developmental readiness prior to entrance in formal school can be done in several aspect of development like physical readiness, cognitive readiness, socio-emotional readiness and self-help readiness (Bierman *et al* 2008).

The term 'physical readiness' can be defined as the capability of child to be completely involved in various activities which are developmentally appropriate. It is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses strength, agility audio-visual acuity and motor skills (gross motor skills and fine motor skills). The gross motor skills include movements of the large muscles of the body to perform activities like running, jumping, kicking, skipping or balancing while fine motor skills entail manual dexterity and accuracy in performing activities liking pincer grasp, scribbling, cutting, tying shoe laces, copying and tracing shapes etc. 'Cognitive readiness' enables the child to make meanings, patterns, and relationships among the learned concepts in order to widen the horizon of their learning through observation, understanding of cause and effect, intentional learning, and representational thinking. Similarly, 'Socio-Emotional readiness' is defined as a capacity of young children to make relationships and interaction with others, ability to express and manage own emotions and to explore the new environments. Whereas, self-help readiness involves capacity of performing activities for oneself to meet daily routine work. Thus the primary focus of pre-school is to ensure the school readiness of children in terms of above mentioned areas for the successful transition to primary school.

Children's skills in various developmental domains are strongly influenced by their experiences in preschool programs (Maxwell & Clifford 2004). The aim of Early Childhood Education is to facilitate the environment that led to the optimal development of the children to their full potential and laid the basis for overall development and lifelong learning. Thus, developmental readiness of children for formal schooling involves interlinking of ready child and ready school.

The ready school component involves school environment and prepared teachers. Readiness of teachers are among the most essential aspects in ensuring and fostering smooth transition of child to first grades by providing various experiences (Sahin *et al* 2013). Teachers' awareness regarding the importance of children's developmental readiness for school is considered as one of the important element to prepare children for entering in next education level (Pekdogan & Akgul 2017). The knowledge, attitude and skills of primary teachers will affect this transition process as early years are critical periods for children that foster their development readiness, thus teachers must have precise knowledge and understanding of various skills and domains of developmental readiness. Hence, the role of teachers is to fulfil the gap between what children brought to school in terms of skills and behaviour with which children will able to deal with the upcoming demands of formal school setting and requirements for further learning.

The analysis of teachers' perception regarding developmental readiness for school indicated huge differences.

Some teachers give more importance to physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and language skills as an indicator of developmental readiness whereas, other teachers give more stress on child's ability to verbally communicate his/her needs, follow instructions, participation in the activities and nutritional requirements (Sahin *et al* 2013). Wernke (2017) reported that according to kindergarten teachers, certain readiness aspects such as chronological age, gender, socio-economic status, and preschool experience were ranked as least important to most important indicator of school readiness.

A Vygotskian perspective suggested that social interactions and scaffold learning experiences of children received from teachers during their early schooling act as facilitators for their school readiness (Brewer 2007). Teachers' recognition and response to children's need for extra guidance and support undoubtedly affect their readiness for formal school. Teacher-child interaction which can promote the developmental readiness of children results in better learning outcomes. IECEI (2017) recommended that all stakeholders including policymaker, teachers and parents need to understand young children's learning needs which are different from what formal education provides and also to acknowledge importance of developmental readiness to establish a solid foundation for life-long learning.

There is a link between teachers' professional qualifications and overall classroom quality. Early childhood trainings of primary teachers are very effective during early grades as it support in equipping teachers with information about child development which help in easy transition of children to schools (UNICEF 2012). Teachers having early childhood training are more likely to use developmentally appropriate practices in the grade 1 that promote developmental readiness. Unfortunately, most of the teachers lack an understanding of the readiness concept and integration of age appropriate learning activities due to which they start 'readying' the children by forcing them to focus on reading, writing and number work in a primary grades by ignoring the various domain of child's developmental readiness (Soni & Sangai 2017). Yapici (2004) reported that knowledge level of teachers regarding developmental readiness should be examined that will enable teachers to identify the individual needs of each child and make plans, programmes and preparations based on these needs.

Keeping above factors under consideration, the present study was planned to analyse the knowledge of teachers regarding importance of developmental readiness for smooth transition of children into formal schooling.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To assess the knowledge of private school teachers regarding developmental readiness.
- To compare the knowledge of rural and urban private school teachers regarding developmental readiness.
- To analyse the relationship of socio-personal variables with knowledge of teachers.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample Selection**

The study was conducted in private schools affiliated with Punjab School Education Board (PSEB) of Ludhiana. Multi-staged sampling technique was used for selection of the sample from rural and urban schools of Ludhiana District. For selection of rural sample, out of 12 blocks of Ludhiana District Block-1 and for selection of urban sample, out of 4 zones of Ludhiana District, Zone-D were purposively selected for this study. The total sample for the present study comprised of 100 private school teachers teaching students of Class-I equally distributed across 2 locales i. e. rural ( $n_1 = 50$ ) and urban ( $n_2 = 50$ ).

### Tool Used

To assess the knowledge of teachers regarding developmental readiness, the Self-Structured Teachers' Knowledge Questionnaire was used to collect information of teachers' knowledge concerning about various domains of development a readiness.

### Statistical Analysis

The collected data were classified and tabulated as per objectives in order to arrive at meaningful and logical inferences by frequency, percentage, Z-test and Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation.

## RESULTS

The present study made an effort to analyse the knowledge level of private school teachers regarding developmental readiness. The results were analysed and presented in tables.

**Table 1: Socio-Personal Profile of Rural and Urban Teachers**

Socio-Personal Variables	Rural (N=50)		Urban (N=50)		Overall (N=100)	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>						
<33 years	24	48.00	22	44.00	46	46.00
33-41 years	18	36.00	18	36.00	36	36.00
>41 years	8	16.00	10	20.00	18	18.00
<b>Educational Qualification</b>						
Diploma in Elementary Teacher Training	7	14.00	6	12.00	13	13.00
B. A. / B. Ed	27	54.00	24	48.00	51	51.00
M. A/M. Ed.	16	32.00	20	40.00	36	36.00
<b>Type of Degree Held</b>						
Correspondence	4	8.00	5	10.00	9	9.00
Regular	46	92.00	45	90.00	91	91.00
<b>Teaching Experience</b>						
≤ 2 years	11	22.00	12	24.00	23	23.00
3 – 5 years	23	46.00	12	24.00	35	35.00
>5 years	16	32.00	26	52.00	42	42.00

The general socio-personal profile of respondent teachers is presented in Table 1 and it was found that higher percentage of teachers irrespective of locale belongs to age group below 33 years while proportion of teachers in age group above 41 years is very low. Similarly about half of the teachers were found to be graduates followed by postgraduates and only few teachers with diploma in Elementary Teacher Training with majority of them having regular type of degree in contrast to degree with correspondence. It was also found that higher proportion of urban teachers had teaching experience more than 5 years while more number of rural teachers had experience of 3- 5 years.

**Table 2: Comparison of Knowledge of Rural and Urban Private School Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness**

Levels of Knowledge	Rural (N <sub>1</sub> = 50)		Urban (N <sub>2</sub> = 50)		Z-Value
	f	%	f	%	
High	6	12.0	10	20.0	1.09
Average	19	38.0	24	48.0	1.01
Low	25	50.0	16	32.0	1.98*

\*0.05 level of significance

Table 2 show the z-test results of percentage distribution of knowledge of rural and urban private school teachers regarding developmental readiness. The results revealed that half proportion of rural teachers were found significantly (0.05 level of significance) at low level of knowledge in contrast to urban teachers. Along with this, no significant differences were found at high and average level of knowledge with higher number of urban teachers in both high and average level as compared to rural teachers.

**Table 3: Knowledge of Rural Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness across Different Socio-Personal Variables**

Socio-Personal Variable	Levels of Knowledge					
	High		Average		Low	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Age</b>						
<33 years	3	12.50	10	41.70	11	45.80
33-41 years	3	16.70	7	38.90	8	44.44
>41 years	0	0.00	2	25.00	6	75.00
<b>Educational Qualification</b>						
Diploma in ETT Regular	3	42.85	3	42.85	1	14.29
B.A. / B.Ed.	4	14.81	9	33.33	14	51.85
M.A. / M.Ed.	2	12.50	7	43.75	7	43.75
<b>Type of Degree Held</b>						
Correspondence	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	100.00
Regular	6	13.10	19	41.30	21	45.60
<b>Teaching Experience</b>						
≤ 2years	5	45.50	2	18.20	4	36.36
3 – 5 years	1	4.40	11	47.80	11	47.80
>5 years	3	18.75	6	37.50	7	43.75

Table 3 shows the knowledge level of rural teachers regarding developmental readiness across different socio-personal variables. It was observed that irrespective of age group and teaching experience, most of the rural teachers were found to have low level of knowledge with less proportion of teachers at low level. Regarding education qualification revealed that more than half of teachers either graduates or postgraduates showed low level of knowledge whereas teachers having regular diploma in elementary teachers training were found to have high level of knowledge. Teachers with degree through correspondence showed low level of knowledge against teachers with regular degree.

**Table 4: Knowledge of Urban Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness across Different Socio-Personal Variables**

Socio-Personal Variable	Levels of Knowledge					
	High		Average		Low	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Age</b>						
<33years	6	27.30	8	36.40	8	36.40
33-41 years	4	22.20	9	50.00	5	27.80
>41 years	1	10.00	7	70.00	2	20.00
<b>Educational Qualification</b>						
Diploma in ETT Correspondence	0	0.00	2	33.30	4	66.70
B.A. / B.Ed.	7	29.20	11	45.80	6	25.00
M.A. / M.Ed.	4	20.00	11	55.00	5	25.00
<b>Type of Degree Held</b>						
Correspondence	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00
Regular	8	17.77	22	48.88	15	33.33

Table 4: Contd.,						
Teaching Experience						
≤ 2years	3	25.00	6	50.00	3	25.00
3 – 5 years	1	8.30	7	58.30	4	33.30
>5 years	7	26.90	11	42.30	8	30.80

Table 4 represents the level of knowledge of urban teachers regarding developmental readiness across different socio-personal variables. As per the data observed in the table, equal proportion of teachers in age group below 33 years were found at average and low level of knowledge. However, the majority of teachers in the rest of the age group showed an average level of knowledge. Teachers having correspondence diploma in Elementary Teacher Training showed low level of knowledge against to their graduates and postgraduates counterparts. Again, teachers with regular degree had better knowledge as compared to their counterparts with correspondence degree. Irrespective of teaching experience years, most of the urban teachers showed average level of knowledge.

**Table 5: Correlation Between Socio-Personal Variables And Knowledge of Teachers Regarding Developmental Readiness**

Socio-Personal Variables	Knowledge Of The Teachers
Age	0.05
Educational Qualification	0.38**
Type of Degree Held	0.18
Teaching Experience	0.57**

\*\* 0.01 level of significance

Table 5 represents the correlation analysis between socio-personal variables and knowledge of teachers regarding developmental readiness. The results showed that there was a positive and significant (0.01 level of significance) relationship of educational qualification of teachers with teachers' knowledge regarding developmental readiness was observed. Similarly, teaching experience of the teachers was also found to have significant (0.01 level of significance) and positive relationship with knowledge of teachers.

## DISCUSSIONS

The knowledge of teachers regarding developmental readiness in young children has been analysed in the current study. Some educationalist suggested that teachers' awareness about the importance of developmental readiness is important to prepare children for adjusting in formal school environment. Literature refer to a need for systematic research concerning to the analysis of teachers' knowledge. According to Rimm-Kaufman *et al* (2000), pre-school and primary teachers were aware regarding entry in formal schooling is a transition period in child development which require supportive learning environment. The pre-school teachers laid more emphasis to socio-emotional skills and motor skills over cognitive skills for smooth transition of children in formal school (McBryde *et al* 2004). Some studies revealed that teachers with more teaching experience give less importance to academic skills against teachers with less experience. The teachers of kindergarten laid emphasis on children's physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development as important indicators of school readiness (Olsen & Lauren 2010).

The results of present study revealed that major proportion of the teachers belonged to the age group below 33 years, had educational qualification upto to M.A./M.Ed. with regular degree and had teaching experienced more than 5 years. The locale differences in knowledge of the teachers revealed that urban teachers were found to have better knowledge regarding developmental readiness in comparison to rural teachers.

A study conducted by Jain (2012) reported that teachers' education mode affects their attitude and knowledge level. Teachers trained with formal mode were found to have better knowledge than distance mode. Along with this, private school teachers were found to have positive attitude than government teachers. Teaching experience was also found to affect knowledge level significantly and results showed that teachers with less experience had low knowledge level than teachers with more teaching experience. According to Lin *et al* (2003), teachers' knowledge regarding developmental readiness could be influenced their age, gender and geographic region. The above finding supports the results of the current study.

The study finding also showed that there was a positive and significant correlation of educational qualification as well as teaching experience with knowledge of teachers regarding developmental readiness of young children.

In support of the present result, Nair *et al* (2017) also suggested that diploma education should be the minimum qualification of teachers as highly educated teachers were effective in performing pedagogical skills. Kumru (2013) reported that the preschool teachers had better knowledge regarding smooth transition of children to primary grades as compared to primary teachers. Along with this, Laundry *et al* (2006) revealed that teachers with higher level of educational qualification had better knowledge of activities that encourage skills of various domains of school readiness.

The school readiness of children requires children with adequate developmental readiness to focus on learning and development as well as ready school in terms of school environment and ready teachers with their knowledge regarding importance of developmental readiness of young children. Primary teachers have very important role in smooth transition from pre-school to formal school and make them ready developmentally ready to learn in classroom's stimulating environment that can improve their academic learning. Thus the research paper concludes with some suggestion which can be helpful to the teachers to enhance their knowledge and promote developmental readiness of young children.

- In-service training courses for teachers should be regularly organized to upgrade knowledge and skills of teachers regarding importance of school readiness.
- There should be use of the instructional module for enhancing skills of teachers.
- Teachers and other policy makers need to be sensitized regarding the need of assessing developmental readiness of children along with academic readiness at the time of enrolment in formal school.
- There should be cooperation and communication between pre-school and primary teachers to ensure continuity of program for better school readiness of children.

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